whether products or processes in all fields of technology including micro-organisms, provided they are new, involve an innovative step and are capable of industrial application. The Agreement does not address issues concerning gene banks. In a revised patent regime ICAR and other laboratories in the country would have the same opportunities for seeking intellectual property protection for their inventions as are generally available.

Opposition to Dunkel Draft

695. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is considerable opposition in the country on the signing of Dunkel Draft as it may surrender the economic sovereignty of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof mentioning the merits and demerits of the Dunkel Draft; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to save the economic sovereignty of the country after signing the Dunkel Draft?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The Uruguay Round results will on the whole be advantageous to us in increasing our exports. There will be increased market access opportunities for Indian goods as a result of lowering of tariffs and the phase out of the multi-fibre arrangement. The services agreement would also provide export opportunities. The rules govering multilateral trade have been strengthened. Though we will be required to amend our patents regime there are safeguards against abuse of patent rights by the holder. Our development policies are not constrained. Question of surrendering economic sovereignty does not arise. In any International agreement Sovereign nations can agree to certain conditionalities for advancing their mutual interest.

Growth of High Value Yielding Tobacco

696. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal to encourage tobacco farmers to grow higher value yielding tobacco;

(b) what directions have been given to the Tobacco Board to encourage farmers to make such a conversion; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (c) Government has not received any such proposal. However, Government has been all along trying through the Tobacco Board to encourage farmers to improve the quality and productivity of FCV tobacco.

Joint Ventures with Uzbekistan

@697. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal for joint ventures and investment in Uzbekistan which had rich resources of coal, gas non ferrous metals and gold; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Government are generally encouraging and facilitating joint ventures in Uzbekistan as a part of the trade promotion strategy for that country, eight Indian joint ventures in Uzbekistan were approved during the last couple of

@Previously Unstarred Quartion No. 539. Transperred from 24.2.94.

years. At present, however, no specific proposals are udner Government's consideration.

Proposal for Export of Edible Oil

698. SHRI S. AUSTIN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to export endible oils during the current financial year;

(b) whether all varieties of edible oil have been included in the proposal;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the details of the edible oil which have not been considered in the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (d) Export of edible oils (except groundnut oil) in consumer packs upto 5 Kg. is now freely allowed.

Import of Coal from foreign Countries by Tamil Nadu Government

699. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Tamil Nadu Government have recently imported coal from foreign countries; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard and to what extent coal has been imported and is likely to be imported in the coming years?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, Tamilnadu Electricity Board has imported 2.30 lakh tonnes of coal during Aug-Sept'.93. Tamilnadu Government have intimated that there is no proposal to import coal in the near future.

700. *[Transferred to 8th March,* 1994].

Proposal to allow export Oriented units to import tea

701. SHRI SOM PAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to allow export oriented units to import tea;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have studied the likely impact of such a move on Indian Tea Industry and the tea growers; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Import of tea is allowed only to Export Oriented Units and units in Export Processing Zones for re-exports only after blending with Indian teas. While allowing such imports adequate safeguards have been taken by the Govt. to ensure that such imports do not affect the domestic tea industry and also the image of Indian tea in the World market.

(c) Under the scheme which deals with Export Oriented Units, permission is given to import tea for blending with Indian tea for export. This scheme prescribes a minimum of 40% of value addition to be achieved by such enterprises and also stipulates that the Tea Board logo which symbolises pure Indian tea is not to be used in such cases. It also prescribes tea to be exported only in small packets and not in bulk with a view to promoting export of value added teas. These units are not allowed any domestic sale in order to ensure that there is no adverse effect on